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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
841 Chestnut Building
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

NOV -8 1991

[REDACTED]
Palmerton, Pennsylvania 18071

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of September 30, 1991 concerning the environmental problems in Palmerton.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is required by law to negotiate with any potentially responsible party (PRP) in an effort to have the PRP cleanup any site which EPA deems the PRP may have contaminated. If these efforts fail, then EPA has the responsibility to cleanup the contamination using funds from what is known as the Superfund. At present, EPA is still in negotiations with the PRPs for the cleanup of those homes where EPA found contamination during the sampling conducted in Palmerton last May. EPA is pursuing the most economically and environmentally sound alternative to cleanup the contamination. Only when we have determined what the chosen cleanup alternatives will be, can we discuss the proposal with the individual homeowners. We, too, would like to do this on a more personal level and not in an open forum. While the public has the right to know generally what will be done, the specifics should be discussed with the homeowners.

We are now conducting a vastly enlarged environmental sampling program in Palmerton and Jim Thorpe. The participants for this sampling program were determined by their participation in the recently concluded health study done by the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR). This was to provide environmental data from those homes that were tested by ATSDR in order to determine any potential relationship between blood lead levels and lead in the home environment. Until the results of this large sampling effort are known, we cannot speculate on what additional, if any, measures may need to be taken.

EPA's shares your concern about the health and well-being of your family and all the families in Palmerton. We hope that upon completion of the environmental sampling program we will have a

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better understanding of the environmental problems in Palmerton and will be better able to develop the comprehensive solutions to deal with them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Walter Graham", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Walter Graham, Chief
Eastern Pennsylvania Remedial Section6

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ORIGINAL
(Red)

[REDACTED]
Palmerton, PA 18071

September 30, 1991

Mr. Walter Graham, Division Director
Environmental Protection Agency
Region III
841 Chestnut Bldg.
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Mr. Graham,

As a resident of Palmerton, I was greatly disturbed after the meeting that was held on September 25th at our Borough Hall. It was my understanding that this was to be a one-to-one approach, not an unruly free-for-all. The resultant "meeting" was not the fault of your agency, but of representatives of the PRP's who wish to undermine our badly needed clean up. I would like to offer you my thoughts on this matter. Before I do, however, you should be aware that I am a member of Palmerton Citizens for a Clean Environment. But these opinions are strictly mine, I do not speak for the group.

I am under the impression that the first twenty-four homes that underwent testing will now be eligible for clean up. This issue is now between your agency and those twenty-four homeowners. It would seem to me that the next step would be for the EPA to meet with those people and decide on a valid approach. Those people have a right to voice their worries where their homes are concerned, and you have a responsibility to hear them without being subjected to a public meeting and listening to ridiculous accusations. Is this possible?

Because of the vast scope of our particular site, I realize that this next question may be difficult to answer. What will the protocol be for the next wave of testing? I understand that the people who have participated in the health study will be the next group to have their homes and yards tested. If I am not mistaken this could be approximately 500 people. When those properties have been evaluated, what will be your next step? There are many of us who were not a part of the original twenty-four properties, nor were we selected for the health study. But because of our proximity to tested homes, we have an interest as to what may be found in our own houses.

My concern here is, and always has been, the health and well-being of my family. If there is a danger to my child in my home, I want to know about it and do something about it. Our children deserve to grow up in healthy surroundings, and we have a responsibility to make this possible.

I appreciate your time and would urge you to reply before October 10th so that I may relay any relevant information to our families and to our group. Thanking you in advance, I am

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Sincerely,

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cc: Tony Koller
Tom Volpaggio

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